



## The Bagman's Newsletter - No. 11 – November 1999

*Greetings,*

Firstly, a warm welcome to three new Associate Sides: **Blue Anchor Morris** from Helston, Cornwall; **The Dunton Morris** from Bedfordshire, and **Ansty Morris Men** from Leicester.

This Newsletter will probably reach you in early December, may I wish you all a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Millennium. A Christmas message from the **Squire** is enclosed.

This Mailing also includes a number of separate items:

- Inevitably – there are more **amendments** to the Directory.
- An **Application Form** for the **ARM** at Derby, hosted by **Ripley**.
- An updated “**Shop List**” for that last minute purchase for Santa!
- For the Advisory Council – Minutes of the Meeting at Birmingham in late November.
- **Publicity**. Two items: *The Sharp/Kimber 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*. To assist in publicising this, notes useable as a handout or as a basis for your own publicity [text also available by Email] – this is based on notes by **Bob Grant** of **Headington Quarry**.

“**MORRIS 2000**”. The master of a **logo** for use on programmes and advertising, to assist recruitment and as an aid to marketing *Morris in the Millennium*. [This is a joint initiative by all three Morris Organisations].

**Reminders: Did you send your Membership and Insurance renewals?** If not you now owe the increased amount £45 for Members; £35 for Associates.

**Did you send in a Ring Meeting Application?** There is still space at Thaxted. Apply NOW.

*Remember: Unless you pass on the content of this Newsletter to the Men in your Side, the information stops with you. A summary is included on the last sheet.*

*E-mailed versions of the Newsletter are available on request [ideally as an attached Word document or an rtf file; please order and specify by Email].*

## THE SQUIRE'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

First of all, a very big thank you to all the Sides who organised Ring Meetings in 1999. They were all very successful in their own different ways. My thanks also to the Sides who invited me to their ales and feasts. I have enjoyed every one of them. It is and has been a privilege to enjoy the fun and fellowship of the Morris.

Two items of news from **Thaxted**: Many of the sides who have visited Thaxted over the years will remember **Kate Butters**, life-long companion to the late **Arthur Caton**. On Sunday 7 November 1999, Kate Butters celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thaxted Morris Men danced for her and I was able, having just returned from Boars Head's Curry Feast, to wish her a happy birthday on behalf of the Ring.

The second item of news is to report that **Father Richard Rowe**, Vicar of Thaxted for the past ten years, has resigned. He will be leaving Thaxted at the end of January to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. Fr. Richard, like all his predecessors, made all the Morris Men welcome in Thaxted Church. He has asked me to pass on his best wishes to all the sides whom he has met over the past ten years and to wish us all well.

What's happening next?

**Boxing Day 1999** -- No-one, I hope, needs reminding that 26 December 1999 is a significant date in the Morris diary. I hope that as many Sides as possible will dance on Boxing Day and will include Laudanum Bunches in the list of dances. Let your local media know what you are doing and why.

**ARM 2000** -- The ARM on 1<sup>st</sup> April will include the election of the next Squire. I hope that all sides will consider the merits of each candidate carefully and vote. Is it right that only 50% voted last time?

There will also be an opportunity to discuss Daniel's "can of worms". My thanks to the Area Reps who did the survey and to the individuals who wrote to me direct. I plan to include in the next mailing a discussion paper for members to consider and debate at the ARM.

.... and finally,

I wish all dancers, musicians, fools and beasts a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. I look forward to your company in 2000.

Daniel Fox -- Squire

December 1999

## FROM THE TREASURER

*Happy Christmas – and remember to buy your gifts, including some brand new super CD's, from the updated shop list enclosed with this Newsletter!!*

*Steve Adamson* (Ba - Hum Bug!!)

## IN MEMORIAM

**Michael McArdle.** It is with great sadness that **Icknield Way** announces the death of one of their best young dancers, **Michael McArdle**, at only 21 years of age. He died on the morning of Sunday 3 October 1999, in a railway line accident in Reading.

Although possibly not known by name to other teams, he was recognised as one of their regular 'under 40+' dancers who excelled dancing the Bampton Jig 'Princess Royal', with his friend **David Andrews**, at many gatherings with other Sides over the past few years.

Michael joined the IWMM Boy's Team when he was 7 years old, under the tutelage of **Phil Carmichael**, and joined the men's team when he was 10, already an accomplished dancer. He danced with IWMM for 11 years and was of course in his prime as a Morris dancer, being at just the right age to combine knowledge with skill and athleticism.

He will be terribly missed both for his ability and his ebullient personality. – [Sem Seaborne]

## ARM 2000 – A REMINDER.

The **2000 ARM** of **THE MORRIS RING** will be held from **31 March to 2 April 2000**. Hosted by **Ripley** in Derby. The ARM itself will be on 1 April 2000. The Application Form is in this month's bundle - return to Ripley please **NOT** the Ring Bagman.

## NOMINATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS - A REMINDER.

Any Nominations for **Squire** and **Treasurer**, also **Elected Representatives** due for election, also any **“Proposed Alterations to the Constitution”**, or other **“Formal Resolutions for Discussion”**, must be sent to the Bagman by the end of December 1999.

## RING MEETINGS – 2000

There have been a good number of timely applications for the Ring Meetings. A listing of Sides that had applied by the first deadline is given below, just in case any were lost in the post. **Chalice** is well over-subscribed; so there will be some Sides disappointed. For future reference, putting a second choice on your form does not lessen your chances in the “ballot” for first choice – however, if you are not selected, it can naturally increase your chance of your second choice!!

**Anker** and **Richmondshire** were marginally oversubscribed; they are reviewing their numbers but one or two Sides may be disappointed. **Thaxted** is the usual flexible Meeting – but please apply as soon as possible so that the organisers know what is happening.

At the first closing date, applications had been received from: Aldbury, Bedford, Benfieldside, Boar's Head, Bristol, Cam Valley, Chanctonbury Ring, Claro, Colchester, Coventry, Dartington, Dolphin, Dolphin, East Kent, East Suffolk, Exeter, Faithful City, Foresters, Furness, Green Ginger, Harthill, Hartley, Helier, Icknield Way, King John's, Leominster, Letchworth, Long Man, Manchester, Martlets, Men of Wight, Mersey, North Wood, Oakworth, Offley, Plymouth, Ripley, Rutland, Shakespeare, Spring Grove, Stafford, Stafford, Standon, Sydney, Thaxted, Trigg, Uttoxeter, Wadard, Wath upon Dearn, Wessex, West Somerset, Westminster, Winchester, Woodside, Wyre Forest.

**Quentin Jarvis [East Suffolk]** E-mailed in a last minute panic Ring Meeting booking – he could not find The Form. He was reassured that this was because he had already submitted it in very good time!! He had not realised he had been so efficient, “... **please put it down to a disgusting and totally unforgivable day of sobriety.**” For those who submitted late applications, my apologies if your chosen Meeting was oversubscribed and you missed the ballot – better luck next year; meanwhile please apply for Thaxted which still has space.

## MILLENNIUM DOME

Our “Domemaster” **Paul Montague** has had a further communications from “The Dome”, which is now wavering and unsure of what it is offering!! Paul continues to pursue our interests. The Dome suggested that we might all like to go with our local towns on their “Your Town” days [generally in the mid-week] - we were not enthusiastic. Whether they fear that there will be too many free entrants, in view of poor ticket sales, we do not know. Watch this space and Paul will also be in touch. Thank you for filling in the forms, please continue to send them in so that we know the strength of interest and what weekend dates we can fill.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Jigs Instructional 2000. 21 - 23 January 2000.** **Bert Cleaver** reports that this event is now *Fully Subscribed* with a good mix of old faithfuls and new victims.

**Musicians' Instructional. 11 – 13 February 2000.** Bookings are coming in fast for this weekend, hosted by **Mendip**, so get your application off promptly. Details and Application Form were in the last Newsletter or you can contact the organiser direct: -

**Clive Du'Mont**, 21, Langthorn Close, Frampton Cotterell, South Gloucestershire BS36 2JH.  
**Telephone / fax: 01454 773895 Email: dumontch@aol.com**

## OTHER EVENTS

**National Pipe and Tabor Festival**, Gloucester, 9 -11 June 2000. Workshops, Performances, Conference, Market etc. Contact:- **Stephen Rowley**, Tanronen, Lurks Lane, Pitchcombe, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 6LL. Tel: 01453-763181 Email: srowley@dial.pipex.com

**World Millennium Festival of Sword Dancing** - Whit Weekend 2000. There are plans to incorporate a conference. To date **Ivor Allsop** has agreed to participate, and **John Widowson** (amongst others) has expressed an interest.

**Nine Daies Morris.** **John Tarling** reports that arrangements are progressing. Quite a number of sides are committed to taking part and others have indicated an interest without commitment. Ring Sides dominate in many sections of the route, and there are more Ring participants overall than either Open or Federation. Some more responses [even negative] would be helpful – he suggests that some Sides may be thinking that they can join in at the last moment. Whilst additional dancers at the fixed spots may not be a problem; food and accommodation arrangements need to be finalised fairly soon. If you, or your Side, wish to participate, please get in touch with John. Fuller details were in the last Newsletter.

**Scarborough Fayre.** Not a Ring event, but Yorkshire Coast Morris invite Ring Sides to join them for their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday Weekend of Dance from Friday 30 June - Sunday 2 July 2000. Cost **£16**, which includes camping, transport for tours and to and from evening events, and entrance to ceilidhs Friday and Saturday nights. Children under 14 free. For details and a booking form contact Wendy Bostock, Yorkshire Coast Morris, Tel/Fax: 01723 350078, or e-mail: **wbostock@mistral.co.uk**

## WEB NEWS

**Grand Union Morris** had sent complements to Webmaster *John Maher* on the quality of the updated Web Page. John had in turn highlighted Grand Union Morris as an example of GOOD PRACTICE. They have an updated site at "<http://www.grandunionmorris.co.uk>". It is linked from the [www.TheMorrisRing.org](http://www.TheMorrisRing.org) site. They had also provided practice venue details. John Maher says, *"Would that all Ring Sides gave me the post code and OS map reference for where they meet!"* - His wish is **YOUR** command – please!!

## RING MEETING REPORT – LEICESTER – 1999

The Meeting - the 280<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Morris Ring - celebrated the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first record of Morris Dancing in Leicester, when six dancers were arrested for dancing at the wrong time of year. The Meeting was based at Parkland Primary School in South Wigston, which had excellent [if in some cases rather diminutive] facilities.

Some 14 Sides - some 150 men - attended the Meeting: **Benfieldside; Darlington Mummery; Furness; Green Ginger; Green Oak; Manchester; Oakworth; Peterborough** [Saturday only]; **Stafford; Thaxted** [Saturday Tour only]; **Wessex; West Somerset; and Whitchurch**; as well as the hosts **Leicester**.

Friday evening was spent at the school, although a number did visit a local pub – it appears no music was required there, and those wishing to be vocal returned rapidly to the school!! Supper comprised a cold buffet with an interesting selection of delicacies. "Beacon" Bitter and "Tiger" Best Bitter from Everards of Leicester accompanied the meal. Informal dancing and singing got underway in good time in the Hall and carried on until past midnight when less formal activity continued around the bar.

Saturday dawned fine and after a very substantial breakfast, the Sides en-bussed. The weather for the Saturday tours [and indeed for the whole weekend] was hot and generally sunny.

Three tours visited the towns and a range of villages in the area. A Squire's tour visited each of these three tours. The tours visited West Leicestershire, including Market Bosworth and Leicester; East Leicestershire; and North Leicestershire, including the Bell Foundry at Loughborough. This latter tour had the services of the Leicester Town Crier, who announced the dances in fine style.

All the Tours converged on Leicester for a Massed Show. The full ensemble joined up at one end of Leicester's Pedestrian area for a hot and humid Winster Processional three quarters of a mile to Town Hall Square. The dances were again announced by the Leicester Town Crier.

The weather stayed fine throughout, except for a single brief shower of rain. With excellent communications to the "above", this shower started exactly coincidental with **Manchester's** show dance, and then, on cue, finished as they did. Not many hosts can organise such things to ensure that their North-Western guests feel at home!! After the show the Men en-bussed for their final spot, for a few dances and a few drinks, then returned to the School for the Feast.

The Guests at the Feast were: - The Lord Mayor of Leicester; The Town Crier of Leicester [who is a former World Champion Crier] who had accompanied Tour C during the day. Also on the top table were: The Ring Officers; the Squire of Leicester, **John Benthams**; the Meeting Bagman, **Charlie Corcoran**; and his fellow organiser, **Peter Johnson**. Present, as a guest of the Leicester Men, was **Steve George**, a Founder Member of the Side.

The menu: - Spinach and Nutmeg Soup; Roast Lamb, Potatoes and Seasonal Vegetables; Apple with Sultana Pie and Custard; Cheese and Biscuits and coffee.

The Speeches and Toasts followed: Whilst there was no Loyal Toast, The Squire of the Ring proposed a Toast to the City of Leicester, as well as proposing The Immortal Memory. The Squire of Leicester, John Benthams, proposed the Toast to the Visitors. **Manchester** made the Reply and the Toast of Thanks to the Hosts. It was noted that the "salt cellars" [the Staff Bearers] which supported the Squire's Staff, had been presented by Manchester. [Omitted from mention at that time, but remarked upon and displayed later, was the Musician's Badge, which had been presented to the Ring by **Benfieldside**, who were also present]. There was also a presentation of a framed cartoon to **Peter Johnson** to remind him of his forceful organisation!!

There were a number of songs, the singing being of a high standard: Benfieldside sang the Galway Shore; **Darlington Mummerys**, Drink Old England Dry; **Green Ginger**, Bring Me the Punchladle. There was also a song from **Stafford's Peter Morgan**. The Fool of **Oakworth**, **Moss Ambrose**, provided a recitation; as later did **Green Oak** and **Manchester**, whose **Howard Mitchell** gave "Three Happence a Foot". **Wessex** requested we "Make Mine a Barrel" and **Leicester's** fiddler fiddled. At some stage in the proceedings, there was a break to clear the tables – after which more songs and recitations were presented: these include another play from the **Darlington Mummerys** and a song from the **Leicester Squire, John Benthams**. Singing, playing and dancing continued in the School Hall until the normal late hour.

On the Sunday – after another very substantial breakfast, the Men formed up at the back of the School to process "the long way" to St Thomas' Church for a 9.30am Service [the regular service having been put back to fit us in!!].

The Squires' staffs were presented at the altar during the first hymn, and retrieved during the last. The Morris Band accompanied the hymn "The Lord of the Dance". The Sermon included some well-composed thoughts on Solomon dancing in the Temple - there was comparison between dance and tradition of the church. It was considered that much loss of tradition had been the fault of the church. However, there must be change, for without change we become frozen in time and are dead. The Offertory Dance by the Hosts, Leicester, was Jubilee from Ilmington. Finally, **Whitchurch** danced Bampton to close the service.

After the Service, there was a brief show for the benefit of the Parishioners. Then the Men walked the short distance back to the school, when there was time to pack up and partake of refreshment various before en-bussing at 11.30am for the lunch spot.

Whereas many meetings finish on a low note with a casual lunch, Leicester took the opportunity to finish on a high, with both show and massed dancing, before and after lunch, at Farm World at Stoughton, a working show farm. Many fine real ales and a cider were available from the on-site CAMRA pub. After the first part of the show, at about 1.15pm, Men were provided with a light lunch – a filled roll, a sticky Danish and a packet of crisps. After which there was more dancing. Then all too soon it was over. The Men en-bussed to return to the school; pack and depart.

The entire weekend went smoothly. A pat on the back for each and every member of Leicester, but particularly for the Meeting Bagman, Charlie Corcoran and also Peter Johnson, whose joint attention to detail ensured that all the arrangements under their control went without a hitch. We thank them all for providing a splendid weekend – and, with the one planned exception, sunshine throughout.

## MEETING REPORT – THE SHERBORNE INSTRUCTIONAL

*Alan Dandy* of **Stafford** has kindly provided the bulk of this Report on the Ring Instructional.

Bearing in mind that everyone had been given a map, one cannot but admire the number of ways that Men found of getting to Sutton Bonnington for the Sherbourne Instructional weekend. This was held from 1st - 3rd October under the technical authority of **Bert Cleaver**, with assistance from **Greensleeves** and the incomparable hospitality of **Dolphin**.

The 'easy-going' village, with village stores, one telephone box, and two pubs was descended upon by about thirty/forty Morris Men. The Village Hall hidden down a narrow lane, provided a hostel for sixteen men who were searching to improve their Sherbourne technique (from **Black Jokers, Bathampton, Handsworth, Furness, Mersey, Packington, Stafford, Wath** and **Winchester**); eight or nine well practised in it (**Greensleeves**); Bert Cleaver as head cook, Foreman Instructor, time-keeper and Reveille Sergeant; and ten or twelve who didn't mind what was going on provided the meal times were kept to (**Dolphin**) - actually several were seen partaking of the instructional between food preparation duties, serving and washing up.

The very excellent cuisine, impeccable organisation [a combination no doubt of Dolphin Men and Bert Cleaver], and Bert's ability to fit in more Sherbourne dances than most believed existed, finding time to detail the steps, the hands, the balance, the timing, the music, discharge duties of executive head chef, and still be in the pub everytime anyone else walked in, shows his immeasurable ability, energy, culinary skills, sheer knowledge of the Sherbourne Morris tradition and more than a little administrative proficiency. Not forgetting, as Bert would be first to admit, the local knowledge and Sous-Chefery of Dolphin Men, and the support of Greensleeves in the form of demonstration, coupled with not just a little assistance in the galley.

Of course at the base end of the weekend was none other than our very own and now slim line (relative and generous interpretation), Ring Treasurer, **Steve Adamson**, who was so exhausted merely watching what was going on Saturday morning, he had to lie down for the whole afternoon.

Starting Friday evening after an introductory pint of Kimberley Ale, and dinner of Soup, Chicken & Mushroom Pie etc. etc. etc. Sherborne's unique stepping was rehearsed followed by detailed Constant Billy and Allison's Fancy, another double stick dance created by the afore-mentioned Bert, to meet the needs of two circumstances. The first to create a Morris tune with known copyright, the second to add another stick dance to the tradition, to improve choice.

Saturday's sessions necessarily repeated Friday evening's then went on to cover the rest of the tradition with detailed explanations of each step and hand movement as and when needed. Dances included (not in order!) Young Collins, Cuckoo's Nest, Old Woman Tossed up in a Blanket, Trunkles, Lads a-Bunchum, Orange in Bloom, Monk's March, How d'ye do (Swaggering Boney), Blue eyed Stranger (the side-step dance), jigs Princess Royal, and Jockey to the Fair, and double jigs Highland Mary, I'll go & Enlist, and My Lord Sherbourne's.

Saturday Lunch, taken somewhere in the middle was Soup and Pasta & Bolonaise sauce. The latter jigs were 'saved' until the first Sunday session, the second session was a Bert Cleaver special of "Once again from the Top" - Once through every dance/jig covered over the weekend ! Several were recorded as "AWL" during this final session - Take Note: neither mental or physical exhaustion, alcohol or food surplus, nor "a long way home" will be taken as excuse, brownie points will be lost !!

The King's Head, with variegated array of photographs of recent-past Royalty, also boasted several birds (feathered variety & caged), and a formidable collection of half pint tankards from the days when ale was sold by the jug for home consumption, and tankards loaned out for the night. As half-pints however they were redundant for the Morris weekend, as for some pub-locals was the whole event.

A couple who occupied a small table strategically central to the whole bar, were joined half way through the Saturday evening by a third 'gent'. They managed a marathon task of endurance, for over two hours, not only ignoring everything around them, but keeping straight faced conversation throughout, as Bert first, residing his drink on "their" table, and knocking over a bottle of tonic, then "beating to quarters" on pipe & tabor at a volume only Bert can raise, not more than eighteen inches from the afore-mentioned 'gent's left eardrum and raising song which engulfed the whole bar including the landlord and other pub-locals tackling the mentally strenuous exertion of fives 'n threes. Their only other detectable movement throughout their dogged ordeal was when they knocked over a bottle of beer themselves, probably in sympathy with Bert's tonic.

The landlord's reception was however much more to the expected standards with fine ale & spirits, an ever-elastic timing and cordial joining-in on the choruses. The session ended well after midnight.

The Feast on Saturday night was Pate, Pork in a prune sauce with roast potatoes, broccoli & green beans, followed by Plum & Apple crumble with cream, Cheese & Biscuits, Coffee & Mints. The Loyal Toast by **Chris Grigg** of **Dolphin**, The Immortal Memory by **Harry Stevenson** of **Winchester**, The Morris Ring by **Idris Roker** of **Bathampton**, proceeded a very Splendid session of song beginning with **Stafford's Peter Morgan**.

It should not go un-recorded that **Ivor Allsop** spent the weekend taking video/audio records of the event, particularly the demonstrations by **Greensleeves**, and offered un-edited copies at minimal cost.

On behalf of all who took part, our warm thanks to Bert Cleaver and the back-up Team, for an excellent weekend with real purpose, particularly the advancement and embellishment of one of the finest traditions of English Morris - Sherborne.

## JOCKEY 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**Jockey** celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in fine style. On the Friday evening all were bussed to the Lamp Tavern for a buffet supper and a selection of fine ales [Church End's Gravedigger Mild and Stanway's Bitter being notable]. Various song and music was played – and a side danced rapper [without swords!]. Past Squires **Tim Sercombe** and **Roy Yarnell** practised their whistling monologue.

On Saturday, two groups alternated between walking tours in Birmingham centre and countryside coach tours. The morning "country" Tour took in Haden Hill House and the Sarah Hughes' brewery [the Dark Ruby Mild [6%] being a must!! – the bitters were excellent too]. This inspired **Coventry**, and Jack Brown of **Stafford** to a fine Fieldtown Trunkles. The afternoon Tour visited Sandwell Park Farm and The Pie Factory [a pub!].

Lunches were staggered before and after a massed show in the City centre. **First Sedgeley** joined the morning Tour in Birmingham Centre. A damp afternoon and whilst sheltering we were treated to New Biggen Rapper from **Southport Sword** and Ampleforth from **Coventry** with help from **Claro**.

The evening Feast was accompanied by three fine ales from the local Beowolf brewery [Noble Bitter 4.0%; Swordsman 4.5% and Heroes Bitter 4.7%]. The Feast menu included: Soup; Steak and Guinness Pie; Apple Crumble; Cheese; Coffee.

Grace was said by the **Jockey** Bagman, **Dick Franks**. The Loyal Toast by their Squire, **Al Brain**. Ring Squire, **Daniel Fox**, proposed the Immortal Memory. Members of Jockey, past and present spoke – and remembered those no longer with us. The "Mug's Mug" was shared by past Ring Squire, **Roy Yarnell**, and past Ring Treasurer, **Richard Sinclair**, who forgot to pay for their parking when attending the Ring Advisory Council – being so used to their normal free parking at the Lamp Tavern in evenings after practice. Their Mug-ish qualities were emphasised by the Ring Squire who noted that he had also parked free – on their advice – and received a similar fine!!



Songs followed and then the tables were left to be cleared and the dancing commenced, together with some show items: **Southport** danced Longsword and the Squire was led in, expecting the lock to descend around his neck – but found he was “on high” lifted up on said sword-lock – he seemed very relieved to return safely to ground level!! **Jockey** performed a Ducklington Lollypop Man that expanded to 14 men – indeed their Adderbury Postman's Knock also was a “version” for 12.

## ANKER FEAST

**Anker's** Feast followed their Day of Dance [9 October 1999]. Sides present, or represented, included: **Harthill**; **Green Oak**; **Letchworth**; **Coventry**; **Ansty**; **Grimsby**; **Silurian** [past Bagman *Keith Francis*]; **Jockey** [past Squire *Roy Yarnell*]; **Southport Sword**; **Shakespeare**; **Bedford** [the Bagman] and **Thaxted** [Ring Squire, *Daniel Fox*].

Two excellent ales from the local Church End brewery [Cuthberts and Vicar's Ruin] lubricated the event once they had been persuaded to exit the barrels – clever things spiels! The feast [Pate; Stew; Puds various; Cheese; Coffee] absorbed same beer to good effect.

Dancing followed, with a pause for **Anker's** old and new Squires to dance out and in with an Oddington Jig. A scratch long-sword side performed and the **Shakespeare** and **Coventry** representatives danced Go and Enlist, Sherborne. Anker demonstrated that their normal sticks were comparatively short compared to the staves [7 foot plus stretcher handles?] that they found in the hall and used for a Constant Billy, Adderbury. William and Nancy was later danced in fine style to Beethoven's Ninth.

A number took advantage of the floor space available in an adjoining hall, and enjoyed an excellent breakfast that was provided on the Sunday morning.

## DARTINGTON WEEKEND

The start of the half-term weekend [22 – 24 October 1999] meant that travel to escape from around London was a gridlocked nightmare. The Squire and Bagman took six hours to drive down to **Dartington** for their first Day of Dance weekend – but it was well worth it. The guest Sides were **King John's** [together with Past Squire *Geoff Jerram*, whose King John kit seemed to have “shrunk” since its last outing!!] and **Mendip**. Based in Harberton Parish Hall, with superb facilities and real hot showers – and fresh flowers!! Despite torrential rain [during the nights], the whole event from Friday supper and the pub session at the nearby Church House Inn, through to the Sunday lunch was superb. The food throughout the weekend overwhelmed – far too good and far too many calories!!

The weather cleared for the Saturday tour: this coastal tour visited Dartmouth; Stokenham [another Church House Inn]; Torcross for a fish and chip lunch, taken outside in the sun – although the wind-chill cooled the fish!! On to the Hope and Anchor Inn at Hope Cove. Here **Fred Dennis** of Dartington, one of our selfless minibus drivers, received an incapacitating blow to the head in an Upton Stick Dance. He was rushed to hospital, where he hoped for preferential treatment as he is one of their regular ambulance drivers – no such luck. After a couple of stitches they let him out; meanwhile a teetotal Mendip Man had been found to take over the minibus. Tea at a Salcombe Hotel overlooking the estuary, then to the Church House Inn, Halberton, for the Feast and singing.

Sunday was leisurely, with a bonus visit to see construction of the Goff Challenger in Totnes – this is a catamaran in carbon fibre construction, designed to beat the round the world-record. We danced at the visitor centre and then headed up to the edge of Dartmoor for a final lunch [and some dancing] at a third Church House Inn at Holne.

Their hospitality was such, we are trying to persuade Dartington to host the ARM in 2001 !!!

## CAMBRIDGE 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY FEAST

**Cambridge** celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 30 October 1999 with their 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Feast [well they changed the date at some time and had two Feasts in one year!!!]. It followed, as customary, their afternoon AGM and tea, Chelsea buns and jam doughnuts, after which dancing takes place to remove the effects of the stickies and sharpen the appetite.

The Feast in Clare College was a black tie do and attended by members past and present and many of the annually elected Honorary members.

Those present thus represented a wide selection of clubs. The Cambridge Squire, **John Jenner**, was in the Chair. Ring Squire, **Daniel Fox**, proposed the health of The Host Side. He was particularly pleased to be present as his father had been a Founder Member of Cambridge and he was an Honorary Member in his own right.

There was a strong link between Cambridge and **Chipping Campden**, and the Campden Fool was that year's honorary Member. The Squire was wearing the Chain of Office, presented to the Ring at the Camden Ring meeting. The maker of the Chain, **David Hart**, Squire of Campden, was also present.

The silver mounted rose wood loving cup was circulated. It was examined with interest by David Hart, being a fellow silversmith; who suggested that Cambridge's insurance might need a top-up!! The cup proved to contain a delicate blend of Galliano; Champagne; Brandy and Cointreau. After its circulation there was a surfeit of this elixir in a punch bowl – and wineglasses were duly recharged.

The first two Bagmen of The Morris Ring, **Walter Abson** [1934] and **Bob Ross** [1946], were present and in good form. Walter Abson recounted how he had become the first Bagman; he was asleep at the time and awoke to find himself appointed – a familiar feeling for Bagmen!! Bob Ross recalled meeting an old Sherborne dancer in 1937 or 1938: whilst they were humming through the Monk's March tune, the old fellow had put his hands up and forward at the fourth repeat of the corner music. They asked why - and thus collected the "all together now" movement, where previously they had all repeated the particular corner movement across the set.

Walter Abson proposed "Absent Friends". He recalled **Arthur Peck**, whose room used to be used for the AGM. When the meeting was moved elsewhere, he claimed that the room never again received its annual tidying!! He remembered **Rolf Gardner**, whose ambitions for one tour became such that it seemed that the Side would have had to gallop out on white horses and dismount from time to time to give Morris shows.

In place of this spectacular, they had decided on a quiet tour in the Cotswolds – and visited Chipping Campden, where they heard there had once been some dancing. **Lionel Ellis** and **George Hathaway** of Campden had not danced for some time; however, **John Coles** persuaded them to get a Side out to dance for them. The Campden Men said that if it had not been for that tour, and John Cole's persuasiveness, they might never have come out again as a Morris Side. The collection on that occasion amounted to two Pounds and eight Shillings – which paid for supper for all at the Red Lion.

The port circulated, paid for by a bequest from the late **G E Percival-Hornblower**, despite the fact that when passed, the port always got stuck in front of him, as he could not stand the stuff!! One of the decanters is inscribed, in his memory, with a budgerigar – after a song he sang – which only had the one word, budgerigar [or that seems to be the story as far as could be ascertained at that late hour!!]

The year's Guest, who thus becomes an Honorary Member of Cambridge, was the Fool of Chipping Campden. He joined the Morris in 1948 under **Don Ellis** and was launched at the **Bedford** Ring Meeting in September 1950. He had spent 50 years dancing, and had been fooling since 1970; after 1975 he changed from the smock of his predecessors to a multi-coloured jacket.

## BOAR'S HEAD "CURRY" FEAST

The Boar's Head Curry Feast [6 November 1999] was an experience not to be missed. Representatives came from far and wide and included: **Bedford; Benfieldside; Durham Rams; Ebor; Gloucestershire; Green Ginger; Green Oak; Jockey; Letchworth; Mossley; Ravensbourne; Saddleworth; Swaledale; Thaxted; Uttoxeter and Wadard.**

Those with prior knowledge arrived bright and early to book floor space - the late comers had to wait 'til early hours to reclaim dancing space to sleep on!!! [There appeared to be substantial hold ups on the route from Birmingham - indeed some were "so delayed" that they nearly missed the meal - let alone the floor space!! Fortunately there had been a convenient pub nearby with 12 real ales] [I know about those sorts of coincidences!!] We were then sent down to the Black Horse for Sam Smiths at £1.23 a pint. In due course we were allowed back to drink three barrels of an excellent beer from the Goose Eye Brewery. [As for the other barrel from the Old White Bear - the Old may be significant!!].

**Wadard** took the participation-prize by appearing for the Feast browned up and wearing immaculate white paper turbans, salahm-ing to all. The **Letchworth Fool, Roger Conway**, sat upon and burst his bladder. A local Curry Emporium provided the Feast and excellent it was. Varied starters - vegetable and fish pakoras; samosas and kebabs; and a chicken curry main course ["seconds" served from beer jugs nearly caught some by surprise ]. Not a piece of cutlery in sight but plenty of chapatis. However, a small plastic spoon was issued for the Kulfi that followed.

The Bagman proposed a double toast to the Queen and the Queen of Australia, in view of the referendum vote that day. The Squire proposed the Immortal Memory. The Squire of **Boar's Head, Andy Lynch**, sang his toast to the guests - "As you gobbled up your Boar's Head Curry" [to the tune, and in the style of "A shoal of Herring"]. **Bob Pierce**, Squire of **Gloucestershire**, - "he's been invited 473 times and it's the first time he's come", replied for the guests and praised "good fare in good company" - which summed up the event very well.

Songs were presented by: **Keith Gregson, Benfieldside**, "A Child of the 40s reaches 50" - oh how true for far too many of us!! **Bob Carter**, Boar's Head, gave a shaggy Doggie Song - "It's the A\*\*\*s you lick on the way". **Richard Hankinson**, Past Squire/**Saddleworth** sang after recovering from some slightly over active beer that defied gravity and leapt from his tankard. **Wayne** from **Ravensbourne** sang "Wild Mountain Thyme".

After the meal we were adjourned to the pub, while the tables were cleared - some did not get back until 3am; but many did return to danced off the effects of the curry. A good night was had by all and in the morning tea, coffee and toast was served - and cold vegetable pakoras for those of hearty disposition; some departed and others then made their way to Asda for a full English before departing. The less said about the mega-baps found by two **Wadard** reps the better, the 10 inch baps, appeared to contain a full breakfast, with at least two of everything - that needs stamina after a heavy night!!

## NOTING OF NEW DANCES

**Chanctonbury Ring** and **Rumford** have submitted new dances to **John Tarling**, who is co-ordinating the project. He is not sure whether the low response to date reflects lack of interest; unwillingness to make dances public; or the usual difficulty in getting any reply out of Morris Sides. He suggests an ongoing collection of these dances - to be stored initially in the Archives. At some future date, they could be published. John is willing to continue to act as a clearing-house for new dances.

## ARCHIVAL MATTERS

As part of our celebration of Boxing Day and Sharp's meeting with Headington, many Sides will be including Headington dances in their programme on that day. The Archive Committee asks that if Sides take any video on that occasion, that a copy could be provided for the Ring Archive – possibly to be collated into a record of the dancing on the Anniversary Day.

**John Jenner** [Cambridge and Travelling Morrice] now holds an extensive collection of **Arthur Peck**'s photographs [not all Morris!] and other material. Arthur Peck was Squire of the Ring from 1947 to 1949. The material was received from the estate of the late **John Coles** [Cambridge and St. Albans]. It seems that John Coles had, in turn, helped sort out Arthur Peck's estate. The collection also includes some early posters for Morris and Folk Dance events, beautifully scripted by Arthur Peck and looking as fresh as when written in the 1920s. An unexpected find is what appears to be **Kenworthy Schofield**'s personal photograph album.

One of **Russell Wortley**'s photographs in the Sheffield collection was copied to Cambridge – as it was possibly taken by the **Travelling Morrice**. It was labelled as a Bledington Side in 1934. **John Jenner** has investigated further. He has tracked down the names for some of those on the photograph and has spoken to the sister of one. It appears to have been a very short-lived revival of the Bledington Side in 1934/5 for a village fete. He has also identified where the picture was taken. Hopefully an article will appear in the Morris Dancer.

**Ewart Russell**'s correspondence files from his time as Ring Bagman [1959 – 1971] have been retrieved from store in the Vaughn Williams library. They include many of the Annual Reports that Sides used to make to the Ring to enable a Report to be produced for the ARM. Dependent as always on the enthusiasm of the Bagmen of the time, they provide a wealth of information. For Sides with comprehensive Archives, there may be little new, but for older clubs only now building up Archives, this could be a valuable source.

## “THE HISTORY OF MORRIS DANCING 1458 – 1750”

John Forrest's formidable book [450 pages!] is due to be published on 12 January. A review will appear in the next Newsletter. It is a fascinating collation of information on early Morris

## TV APPEARANCES

**Aldbury** appeared on Generation Game on BBC TV. They danced their “Bound for South Australia” [Adderbury Style out of **Sydney** and others Antipodean Sides].

**Ian Dedic** writing on the Web said “It's a pity that Jim stitched us up a bit -- shock, horror -- when it was us -v- the ballroom dancers in a custard pie fight -- he told us to take it easy 'cos of damage to their expensive costumes (so we did) and he told them to splat the hell out of us (which they did). Mind you, it's the kind of joke you'd expect him to play, we just shouldn't have been such nice chaps...”

“And to point out yet another advantage of prostituting ones art on the Generation Game, we recently received an unexpected bonus in the form of repeat performance fees (for cable TV in Holland, Belgium, and France!) of just under 400 quid. Since this arrived just before our last “at home” weekend, we blew the lot on food and beer, which was nice.”

**King's Morris** starred in an Anglia TV programme "Feet First". Anglia approached the Ring for candidate Sides in the region to teach two newcomers to Morris up to performance standard in a day!! It was established that two men learning to dance would be acceptable [as two women were the candidates for the belly dancing episode and that would keep the discrimination even]. The appeal was Emailed to local Sides – and King's moved the fastest.

**Bedford** had also showed interest - but in spite of having insider knowledge, did not respond quickly enough!! **John Dimascio** of **Kemp's Men** reports that they responded also, and were auditioned, but failed to make the Grade – a ladies Side winning the day as representatives from Norwich!! Incidentally, he says that the inside information is that Kemp's ran a very close second for the Belly Dancing episode !!!

The blurb in the national press (Mail on Saturday & Sunday TV Guides) states "A Norfolk couple learn to Morris Dance". King's would like to point out that the two MEN referred to may be a couple, meaning two, but are not a 'couple' in the modern context. Any repeat of this wording may well result in legal action for defamation of character!! He also asked whether they were insured through the Ring for such legal expense or did they qualify for Legal Aid? I understand that unlike Aldbury [on the Generation Game the previous Saturday], they may not have been Custard Pie-ed, but that Steve Adamson's answer on the Insurance issue was the verbal equivalent !!!

## OTHER NEWS

New Associates, **Blue Anchor**, a "Cotswold" side, is based at the pub [and the oldest brewery in Cornwall] of that name in Helston, Cornwall. They were formed by **Peter Reynolds** an early member of **White Hart** who later started **Carn Brea** in 1977. The "youngest is 40 and the oldest well over 60" [so what's different to many other Sides!!!] but Peter doubts he has "ever had so much fun at it as with this bunch – and isn't that a lot of what it's about?"

Another of our new Associates is also pub based – indeed their landlord is in the Side. **Dunton Morris**, are based at the March Hare, in Dunton, Bedfordshire [they are now the nearest Side to the Bagman – lookout Bedford!!]. Their Squire, Foreman and Musician is **Steve [Mitch] Mitchell**, who learnt his dancing with Associates, **Breinton**, in Herefordshire. [now folded due to lack of new members – they should have had Steve on recruitment!!]. They first formed in response to a bet that he could not get up a Side to show a couple of dances for the village bank holiday bash – but they all enjoyed it so much they have kept going. Currently they are a "border" side until they gain confidence to launch into "Cotswold". The Bagman met up with them and collected their subs!! Later that same week they visited Ashwell for their first evening out in their new kit. The Bagman was roped in to make up some eight man Border sets. A car that drew up to ask directions to the pub that was to be the second spot contained **Steven Ashcroft**, Bagman of **Greensleeves** - so the audience there increased by one. It's a small world.

Our third new Associates also have pub – or at least Brewery connections. **The Everards Old Original Ansty Morris** [just **Ansty** in this newsletter from now on!!!] are well known in the Midlands and were up at **Saddleworth** this year. They have just re-kitted to match new colour scheme of their sponsor – guess?! - Everards Brewery.

It seems that the Ring should spend more time in pubs - recruiting - rather than quaffing!!!

Morris camaraderie in the **Stafford** side was put to the ultimate test at the end of the **Leicester** Ring Meeting weekend. Bagman, *Alan Dandy*, offered a family tea. Unfortunately his sister-in-law, "did a *Bert Cleaver*" [I merely quote, and have no detailed knowledge of the incident referred to!!! Ed] substituting salt for sugar in the tea.

Apparently, *Steve Tunnicliff* of **Rutland**, has been organising parts of the Annual Vale of Belvoir Conker Championships at Long Clawson, Leicestershire. OK as a break from dancing I suppose – it was however, staged outside a pub !!

*Brian Bird* of **Belchamp** in thanking on the Web "all the people in USA who helped us out with our trip" has provided the following information. "We've just arrived back from Salem MA having started our travels in Princeton NJ, journeying to New York, Lexington, Concord and Sudbury, culminating our journey by appearing at The Haunted Happenings, Salem." He also suggests that we watch the Web for a précis of their adventures". Hopefully a note for the Circular or Newsletter will follow as well.

**Chanctonbury Ring** was dancing in the Lewes Bonfire Procession on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November.

**North Wood's** practice was visited by the Bagman, following a visit to *Eddie Dunmore* collect the last edition of the Morris Circular. The music on this occasion was a whistle-blowing escapee from **Rutland**. Again one learned of the particular nuances of Morris as one travels to other Sides – so much so that they have renamed their versions of Cotswold Traditions after parts of Croydon - the Addlington tradition springs to mind. When dancing Lichfield we had to follow "an orthogonal path" – a dictionary is issued to every dancer!!

**Bedford** did its annual tour and visit to the Bedford Beer Festival, and were joined by *Graham Wood* of **Yateley** [a former Bedford Man]. Bedford's Beer Festival proved a challenging prelude for an evening with **Anker** for their Feast [report elsewhere].

**Rumford** hosted an Eastern Area Instructional on Oddington, organised by Area Rep *John Tarling*, and excellently instructed by *Tony Ashley*, with assistance from **Anker**. A hard but satisfying day of dancing left those attending rather more competent on Highland Mary; the two stick dances Young Collins and Constant Billy, and the corner dances The Old Frog Dance and Trunkles – the capers in this latter proving the greatest challenge. With only brief breaks for tea and coffee, and lunch from the local chippie - and not a pint in sight - we were pleased to repair to a pub for a refreshing pint afterwards.

**Rutland** held their Annual Feast in mid November. Those Sides represented included: **Bedford; Boar's Head; Coventry; Devil's Dyke; King's Men; Lutterworth; North Wood** and **Shakespeare**. An excellent buffet spread [including the famous cous-cous] washed down with the runner-up Best Beer 1999, the JSB from Oakham Brewery [a brewery set up and a beer devised by one of Rutland's Musicians!!]. A good deal of dancing – on an excellent floor. A jigs session included: Bucknell, "Bonnets so Blue" from **King's Men**; A double Ascot jig "Jockey to the Fair", from **Coventry**; and Bledington "Ladies Pleasure" from **Devil's Dyke**. There followed a massed Fieldtown "Nutting Girl" jig.

On the Sunday morning those who remained danced at an Old Peoples' Home, with a pause for the two minutes silence. They then adjourned to the Grainstore Brewery in Oakham [not to be confused with the Oakham Brewery – which isn't!!], to sample the wares – and do a few dances.

**John Tarling** might have been interested in collecting a “Dearest Dickie” with an interesting additional final Hey as called by **Gerald Willey** of **Shakespeare**. It said something for the skill of **North Wood**'s musician that that this was completed without mishap – a hundred years ago and Cecil [or Cyril as he is known locally!] Sharp would have had it “in the book”!!

Those assembled were then entertained by a travelling mixed Open Morris Side – “The Bunnies from Hell” that carried on where Rutland and guests had left off. It provided an interesting [and educational] contrast in style and attitude – the “Bunnies” pink themed kit and carrot style “handkerchiefs” used for Hinton, Getting Upstairs were certainly “different”.

## EFDSS AWARDS

At the recent EFDSS National Gathering at Cecil Sharp House, **Roy Judge** [Oxford / Ancient Men / Hon Cambridge etc!] was awarded the Gold Badge of the EFDSS, for his many contributions to the Morris and other folk activities. [Info **Derek Scofield** - Manley].

A Gold Badge was also awarded to **Ron Smedley**, who was responsible for many of the Albert Hall Festivals and for teaching Morris and Sword to the boys at the Royal Ballet School (who later formed **Bow Street Rapper**).

Following the awards, there were displays from **Thaxted** and **Handsworth Sword**. Handsworth also performed the Derby Tup and later, when discovered singing downstairs in the bar, were pressed to return to the main hall and give renditions of two carols from the South Yorkshire tradition. [Info **Howard Mitchell** –was Bedford / Manchester - now in Derby].

## 2000 PINTS FOR THE YEAR 2000

**Jon Holmes** of **Kennet** reports that at their AGM a novel idea was proposed for increasing their charity donations next year. Kennet have resolved to drink at least 2000 pints at Morris events in the year 2000 - collectively, not each man!! To allow drivers to participate, the pints may be of any chosen beverage, and not restricted to beer. The Men will place five pence in a special kitty for each pint they drink - increasing next year's charity donations by at least £100. They will monitor the growth rate of this kitty very carefully through the season, and will be taking *urgent remedial action* should this fall below that required to meet their goal!!!

## IN CONCLUSION

A very happy Christmas and best wishes for your Boxing Day, New “Millennium”; Plough Monday and other winter events. I look forward to seeing many of you at various Ales and Feasts, and if not before then, at the ARM on 1 April.

The next Newsletter – late January [ish] – will include the details of the candidate Squires and papers for the ARM. Meanwhile enjoy the Seasonal Festivities, dancing and fellowship.

*Wassail,*

John Frearson, Bagman, The Morris Ring

## ***The Bagman's Newsletter - No. 11 – November 1999 - SUMMARY***

**NEW ASSOCIATES:** We welcome **Blue Anchor Morris** from Helston, Cornwall; **Dunton Morris** from Bedfordshire, and **Ansty Morris Men** from Leicester.

**THE SQUIRE'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE** – The Squire thanks the Sides who hosted Meetings in 1999. He gives news from Thaxted and reminds us of the significance of Boxing Day 1999. He reminds us of the **ARM** and the necessity that all Sides vote in the election of the new Squire. He sends Christmas wishes – as does the Treasurer who also suggests we buy his CDs.

**IN MEMORIAM - Icknield Way** announces the death of **Michael McArdle**, at only 21 years of age. He died on Sunday 3 October 1999, in a railway line accident in Reading.

**RING MEETINGS – 2000** – A list of applicants is given. Chalice was heavily oversubscribed; Richmondshire and Anker are overfull. There is space at Thaxted.

**MILLENNIUM DOME** - Our "Domemaster" **Paul Montague** has had a further communications from "The Dome", and continues to pursue our interests.

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS** – The **Jigs Instructional** is full. There is space at the **Musicians' Instructional** in February 2000. **OTHER EVENTS** include - **National Pipe and Tabor Festival**, Gloucester, June 2000. The **World Millennium Festival of Sword Dancing** - Whit Weekend 2000 and the **Nine Daies Morris** – arrangements for which are progressing well.

**WEB NEWS** – The Ring Web pages have been revamped and updated. Ensure you send your practice location to Webmaster **John Maher** to assist recruits in finding/joining you.

**REPORTS** – There are Reports of the **Leicester** Ring Meeting; The Sherborne Instructional; The **Jockey** 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekend; The **Anker** Feast; The **Dartington** Weekend; The **Cambridge** 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Feast; and The **Boar's Head** Curry Feast.

**ARCHIVAL MATTERS** – If you dance on Boxing Day, try to record the event on Video for a comprehensive survey. **John Jenner** [Cambridge] now holds a collection of **Arthur Peck**'s photographs [he was Squire of the Ring from 1947 to 1949] - one find is **Kenworthy Schofield**'s photograph album. **Ewart Russell**'s correspondence from his time as Ring Bagman [1959 – 1971] have also been retrieved from store in the Vaughn Williams library.

**TV APPEARANCES** - Details of **Aldbury**'s appearance on the BBC Generation Game; also **King's Morris** teaching novice dancers in Anglia's "Feet First".

**OTHER NEWS** – details of our new Associates [see above]; also news from: salty **Stafford**; conkers in **Rutland**; **Belchamp** in USA; **Chanctonbury Ring** at the Lewes Bonfire Procession; **North Wood**'s orthogonal paths at practice; **Bedford** and a Beer Festival; **Rumford** hosting an Instructional on Oddington, with **Anker**; and **Rutland**'s Feast. Finally, **Kennet** have resolved to drink at least 2000 pints, at Morris Events, in the year 2000, at 5p / pint for charity.

**EFDSS AWARDS** – EFDSS Gold Awards for **Roy Judge** [dancer and researcher, member of **Oxford/Ancient Men/Hon Cambridge**] and **Ron Smedley** [Albert Hall Festival organiser and teacher of the Royal Ballet's **Bow Street Rapper**]. There were displays from **Thaxted** and **Handsworth**.

**FIND OUT MORE - ask your Bagman to show you the full Newsletter!!!**

A very happy Christmas and New Year and best wishes for your Winter season events.

*Wassail,*

John Frearson, Bagman, The Morris Ring